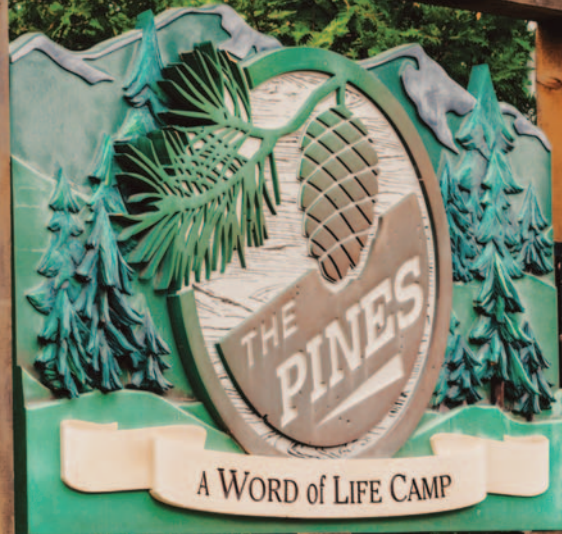


# plug and play marketing



*The FAMILY CAMPGROUND*

Branding and mission  
have a symbiotic  
relationship and  
should be a reflection  
of each other.

■ by Bryant Malone

# Branding Matters

According to the Oxford Dictionary, branding is the “promotion of a product or company by means of advertising and distinctive design.” However, branding is so much more than promotion, advertising or design. Branding is about how an organization makes you feel.

Think about the way this plays out in your own life.

If you’re out for a coffee run and there are two shops next to each other, how do you choose? Do you make your decision based on the logo color or font? Probably not. You likely make a decision based on how you feel about each of those coffee shops.

These feelings are influenced by your experiences. Is one shop more consistent? Is customer service better at one or the other? Your feelings influence your decision much more than the visuals on the outside of the building.

Taking this example further, if you’re in a new town and looking for a local coffee shop, you’re probably going to check out reviews. In other words, you’re interested in learning about the reputation of those coffee shops from others who have been there.

Ultimately, branding is about reputation management. It’s recognizing the difference between the reputation you *have* and the reputation you *want*.

To manage your reputation well, you have to maintain a clear picture of what you are known for and what you want to be known for. This should influence every part of your organization, not just the logo on your website. Branding should impact how you manage customer service, employee benefits, facilities and so much more.

If your mission and core values give you a picture of where you’re going, branding helps you manage the reputation needed to get there. Branding and mission have a symbiotic relationship and should be a reflection of each other.

Reputation matters. So how do you start thinking about your brand and the way it’s being perceived by others? I think it’s as simple as asking these three questions:

1. How do we want people to feel during or after their experience with us?
2. How do our processes, policies or program choices positively or negatively contribute to our guests’ feelings toward us?
3. Does the way we communicate (online, in print, in person) authentically represent the experience that guests will be receiving during their time with us?

Take a day with your team to think through those three questions and you will be well on your way to aligning your brand reputation with the experiences you provide. ■



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